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Statement submitted by Union Women's Center, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Only when all individuals fully realize their human rights, including sexual rights can sustainable development be achieved. Georgia has carried out complex measures in this direction, including the legislative framework and implementation with active participation of civil society. Georgia adopted the Anti-Domestic Violence Law (2006), Anti-Trafficking Law (2006), Gender Equality Law and corresponding National Action plans and also the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). In 2013 a Gender Equality Department was established as a standing unit in the Public Defender's Office and from 2006, the work State Fund for Protection Victims of Domestic Violence and Trafficking. Georgia belongs to that group of countries were the ideology of gender equality and traditional attitudes are based on gender stereotypes.

Governments agreed that human rights includes the right to have control over and decide freely on all matters related to one's sexuality, free from coercion, discrimination and violence.

Attempts by others to control the sexuality of girls and women violate their human rights on a daily basis. These violations include sexual and gender-based violence, stigma and discrimination, limitations on mobility, and denial of meaningful participation in public life, among others. Furthermore, lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, sex workers, and people living with HIV and AIDS face these and other profound violations of their human rights, simply because they are seen to transgress prevailing sexual, gender and other norms.

For young people and adolescents, especially those who belong to the most marginalized, vulnerable and stigmatized populations, many social and economic barriers continue to impede the full realization of their sexual rights. Non-judgmental, and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education are essential to enable young people to challenge harmful gender norms, learn about and claim their rights and navigate healthy relationships.

It is clear: sexual rights underpin the enjoyment of all other human rights and are a prerequisite for equality, justice and sustainable development, including the rights to health, education, housing and employment. In many cases, sexual rights violations and discrimination based on sexuality compromise individuals' economic opportunities and lead to or exacerbate poverty.

Encouragingly, there is increasing recognition at the governmental level of the importance of sexual rights and the need to put in place laws and policies to protect them at the country level. Several countries have undertaken important legislative changes; and more countries are taking necessary steps to provide comprehensive sexuality education for all adolescents and youth. It is high time that our language and policies adapt to the realities and needs of young people.